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THE SECRETARY OF DEFENSE  
WASHINGTON, D. C. 20301

12 JUL 1972

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Honorable William P. Rogers  
Secretary of State  
Washington, D.C. 20520

Dear Bill:

As you know, we have maintained a continuing review within the Department of Defense of U.S. programs and policies regarding chemical weapons, as well as the present capabilities and potential of other countries in this field. I have, as a result of that review, now concluded that it would be in the security interests of the United States to achieve broad international acceptance of an arms control treaty focusing on the prohibition of the production and transfer of lethal chemicals for weapons purposes.

The following are the central considerations that have led me to this view:

- An agreement such as I propose, which would permit us to retain our existing CW stockpiles, would not in any major way affect present U.S. capabilities.
- Existing fiscal constraints and attitudes in this country make it unrealistic for us to plan any substantial expansion of our CW program. These constraints and attitudes are likely to continue for the foreseeable future.
- An international agreement prohibiting the production and transfer of lethal chemicals for weapons purposes would place similar constraints on other countries. It would also help limit the proliferation of significant chemical weapons capabilities.

I am concerned that, in the absence of a U.S. initiative, international discussion of prohibitions on chemical weapons will generate increasing pressures for far more comprehensive prohibitions -- extending to stockpiles and research -- than would be in the U.S. interest. Early United States support for an agreement prohibiting the production and transfer of lethal chemicals would, I believe, satisfy legitimate demands for concrete chemical arms control steps, while deflecting pressures for broader, harmful proposals.

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SCHEDULE OF EXECUTIVE ORDER 11652  
AUTOMATICALLY DOWNGRADED AT TWO  
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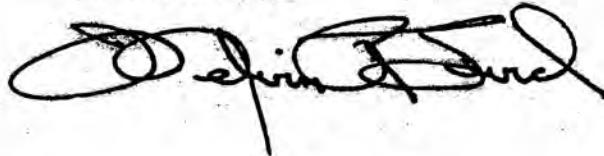
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Therefore, it seems to me to be in the U.S. interest to put forward as soon as possible a concrete proposal establishing a basis for negotiating a sound arms control step that would enhance the security of the United States. I believe that such an initiative, like the other important decisions regarding chemical and biological weapons taken by this Administration, would be welcome both at home and abroad.

The Joint Chiefs of Staff support the views that I have set forth above.

In view of ACDA's experience with the discussions of chemical weapons control now under way at Geneva, and the various ideas and proposals which have already been suggested, I think it would be best for ACDA to take the lead in following up the ideas I have put forward. Specifically, I am proposing to Gerry Smith that ACDA develop for the President's consideration an arms control proposal focusing on the prohibition of the production and transfer of lethal chemicals for weapons purposes. I trust that you will agree with this course of action. The Department of Defense, of course, wishes to work closely with the Department of State and ACDA on this matter at all stages, as we did in working out U.S. proposals for the Biological Weapons Convention and the Seabeds Treaty.

Sincerely,



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